

Announcement of an effort to restore water quality in the North Fork Holston River and the following tributaries: Lick Creek, Beaver Creek, Laurel Creek, Locust Cove Creek, Robertson Branch, Turkey Run Creek, Logan Creek, Toole Creek, Tumbling Creek, Wolf Creek, Burmley Creek, Cove Creek, Abrams Creek, Little Moccasin Creek, Nordyke Creek, Smith Creek, Blue Springs Branch, Dowell Branch, Hilton Creek, Possum Creek and Big Moccasin Creek in Bland, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington and Scott Counties, Virginia.

**PUBLIC MEETING LOCATION:** Hiltons Elementary School, 303 Academy Road, in Hiltons, VA on **December 6, 2011** from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

**PURPOSE OF NOTICE:** The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Conservation and Recreation are announcing an effort to restore water quality, a public comment opportunity, and public meeting.

**MEETING DESCRIPTION:** First public meeting on a study to restore water quality

**DESCRIPTION OF STUDY:** DEQ has been working to identify sources of bacterial contamination and sources of pollutants affecting aquatic organisms. The mainstem of the North Fork Holston River in Bland, Smyth, Washington and Scott Counties is impaired for failure to meet the *Recreational Use* because of fecal coliform bacteria violations and violations of the E. coli standard. Lick Creek, Beaver Creek, Locust Cove Creek, Robertson Branch, Turkey Run Creek and Tumbling Creek in Smyth County, as well as Laurel Creek in Smyth, Bland and Tazewell Counties are impaired for failure to meet the *Recreational Use* because of fecal coliform bacteria violations and violations of the E. coli standard. Logan Creek, Toole Creek, Wolf Creek, Brumley Creek Abrams Creek, Little Moccasin Creek, Nordyke Creek and Smith Creek in Washington County, as well as Cove Creek and Big Moccasin Creek in Scott and Washington Counties are impaired for failure to meet the *Recreational Use* because of fecal coliform bacteria violations and violations of the E. coli standard. Blue Springs Branch, Dowell Branch, Hilton Creek and Possum Creek in Scott County are impaired for failure to meet the *Recreational Use* because of fecal coliform bacteria violations and violations of the E. coli standard. Lick Creek, Laurel Creek and the North Fork Holston River from the Cove Creek confluence downstream to the Tennessee state line are impaired for failing to meet the *Aquatic Life Use* (benthic impairment) based on violations of the general standard for aquatic organisms. Laurel Creek is also impaired for failure to meet the *Aquatic Life Use* based on violations of the temperature water quality standard.

During the study, DEQ will determine the sources of bacterial contamination and pollutants impairing the aquatic community will be identified and total maximum daily loads, or TMDL, developed for the impaired

waters. To restore water quality, contamination levels must be reduced to the TMDL amount. A TMDL is the total amount of a pollutant a water body can contain and still meet water quality standards.

**HOW A DECISION IS MADE:** The development of a TMDL includes public meetings and a public comment period once the study report is drafted. After public comments have been considered and addressed, DEQ will submit the TMDL report to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval.

**HOW TO COMMENT:** DEQ accepts written comments by e-mail, fax or postal mail. Written comments should include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ during the comment period, December 6, 2011 to January 6, 2012. DEQ also accepts written and oral comments at the public meeting announced in this notice.

**TO REVIEW FACT SHEETS:** Fact sheets are available on the impaired waters from the contacts below or on the DEQ web site at [www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/tmdl).

**CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

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